



CALIFORNIA CLIMATE ACTION TEAM

MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: BreAnda Northcutt
(916) 324 9670

REPORT WARNS OF INCREASED FIRE DANGERS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

Officials Discuss Impacts of Global Warming and What the State is Doing to Take Action

RIVERSIDE – Earlier this week the California Climate Action Team released a summary report of 17 scientific studies examining the potential impacts of climate change on California. Today, officials held a press conference in Riverside to explain the report, the science, and what the state is doing to take action on reducing heat-trapping gases which threaten to intensify California's fire dangers.

"The potential impacts of global warming are unmistakable, adding more days of deadly heat, more intense and frequent wildfires, shorter supplies of drinking water and serious public health risks," said Linda Adams, Secretary for Environmental Protection. "That's why Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger set aggressive goals to reduce greenhouse gases. The actions we take today will impact the climate inherited by our children and grandchildren."

The summary report titled "Our Changing Climate: Assessing the Risks to California" was a collaborative effort of the California Center for Climate Change, the only state-funded climate research center in the nation, a virtual center established by the California Energy Commission. The summary report is a compilation of the science included in the Climate Action Team report released in April.

"The latest science suggests that, if global warming is not addressed, the consequences for California's economy, health and environment could be severe," said Dr. Dan Cayan of Scripps Institution of Oceanography and contributing author of the report.

The report explains that if climate change trends continue, the risk of large wildfires in California could increase by as much as 55 percent over the next five decades. According to the research, there are many factors in determining the risks. Increased precipitation combined with hotter

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temperatures could increase southern California fires by approximately 30 percent by stimulating growth available to burn in the fall. In contrast, a hotter, drier climate could promote up to 90 percent more northern California fires by the end of the century by drying out and increasing the flammability of forest vegetation.

The report is the first under an executive order signed in June 2005 by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger that calls for biennial studies on the potential impact on the state of continued global warming.

"Communicating the impacts and environmental problems associated with global climate change is a critical step toward taking the necessary measures to diminishing its growing threat," said Jim Boyd, Vice Chair of the California Energy Commission. "This report is an important public education tool that clarifies the consequences of following a business as usual path and promotes the shared desire to build on the state's successful emission reduction programs. We are all part of the solution."

The California Climate Action Team was initiated by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger last year, and charged with developing suggested strategies to reach the governor's aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets. The report reference above can be found at:

http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/biennial_reports/2006report/.

Members of the Climate Action Team include: Air Resources Board, California Energy Commission, California Environmental Protection Agency, California Public Utilities Commission, California Resources Agency, State and Consumer Services Agency, Department of Food and Agriculture, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of Water Resources, and the Integrated Waste Management Board.

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